

## METROsquash Visits South Africa: The Beyond Sports Summit in Cape Town

By: James Dodson

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Board Chair James Dodson participated in the Beyond Sports Summit in Cape Town, South Africa in early December. Dodson represented METROsquash, which was invited to participate as a result of winning the \$50,000 *United Impact Award* associated with the Summit held last year in Chicago.

More than 80 organizations like METROsquash that use sport to engage young people for educational and cultural enrichment participated. The summit was an opportunity to learn from shared experiences which impact on communities in practically every corner of the globe; and, to engage with business leaders intent on setting new standards for corporate involvement in sports-led social philanthropy. *(METROsquash looks forward to working with management consultants and Beyond Sports sponsor PwC on projects this year.)*

A key principle to emerge in Cape Town, Dodson said, was the importance of providing safe spaces in urban communities, and how sports can help to facilitate the creation and maintaining of them.

"I was proud to share METROsquash's successful experiences with efforts to expand and maintain a risk and crime free environment in our current space and our intension to do the same as we prepare to serve more young people in our own dedicated squash & academic center," Dodson said. "We are right on task with the four key assets of spaces outlined by this global organization."

"Infrastructure/environment: Building and maintaining the actual physical structure of the 'safe space';

"Programming: Implementing impactful and sustainable programming within the 'safe space';

"Safety: Establishing and resourcing reliable safety elements within and around the 'safe space'; and,

"Partnerships: Identifying, building, and maintaining effective, mutually beneficial partnerships which enable all three of the above to exist and last.

"What resonated among the participants in this discussion was use of the term Ubuntu," Dodson said.

"Ubuntu, students told me, is a principle drawn from an African proverb that means a person is a person through other people.

"Intent in those relations are honesty and respect and what resonated for me was the success at which David and his team engage the METROsquash community of volunteers, parents and donors to provide the necessary resources to develop our young people toward their full potential. That's Ubuntu."

Pictured below: (left) UWC Students (center) Tina Smith (right) Cape Town view from hotel

